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The Regimental Bulletin

Phil Kearny Civil War Round Table of Northern New Jersey

***** NEXT MEETING *****

Wednesday, April 20th - 7PM - Online Zoom Presentation

See Details Below to Join In

The Iron Brigade at Gettysburg **Speaker: Lance Herdegen**

This Wednesday's Zoom presentation is on the Iron Brigade at Gettysburg by award-winning journalist **Lance J. Herdegen**. He is the former director of the Institute of Civil War Studies at Carroll University.

Lance was drawn to the Civil War when his father brought home a rifle-musket he found while helping a neighbor clean a shed. Totally entranced Lance began to read everything he could find on the 1861-1865 period. As a true son of Wisconsin, it is difficult to escape not being interested in the Iron Brigade even though his own distant kinsman was killed with the 14th Wisconsin at Shiloh. One of the first books he discovered was Rufus Dawes' "Service with the Sixth Wisconsin Volunteers."



Herdegen previously worked as a reporter and editor for United Press International (UPI) news service covering national politics and civil rights. Lance serves as the historical consultant for the Civil War Museum of the Upper Middle West at Kenosha, Wisconsin and is widely regarded as the leading authority on the Iron Brigade.

He is the author of many articles, and some of his books include: *Four Years with the Iron Brigade: "The Civil War Journal of William R. Ray"*, *"Seventh Wisconsin Volunteers; The Men Stood Like Iron"*, *"How the Iron Brigade Won its Name"*, *"In the Bloody Railroad Cut at Gettysburg: The Sixth Wisconsin of the Iron Brigade and its Famous Charge"*, *"The Iron Brigade in Civil War and Memory: The Black Hats from Bull Run to Appomattox and Thereafter"*.

Among Herdegen's other honors are: *The Iron Brigade Association Award*, *The Harry S. Truman Award of the Civil War Round Table of Kansas City*; *The Award of Merit, State Historical Society of Wisconsin*; *The Gambrinus Prize, Milwaukee County Historical Society*, and the *Service Award of The Civil War Round Table of Milwaukee*.

You must register with this new link before the meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEvdvCvrTMsHNwXbbljVsQK6XOPakmK0aaj>

Reserve Your Room Now for the Annual PKCWRT Gettysburg Trip

Friday, Nov 4th - Sunday, Nov 6th
at the **Best Western in Gettysburg**

Click here to get the Phil Kearny Civil War Round Table Special Rate

https://www.bestwestern.com/en_US/book/hotel-rooms.39139.html?groupId=R68RS6A4

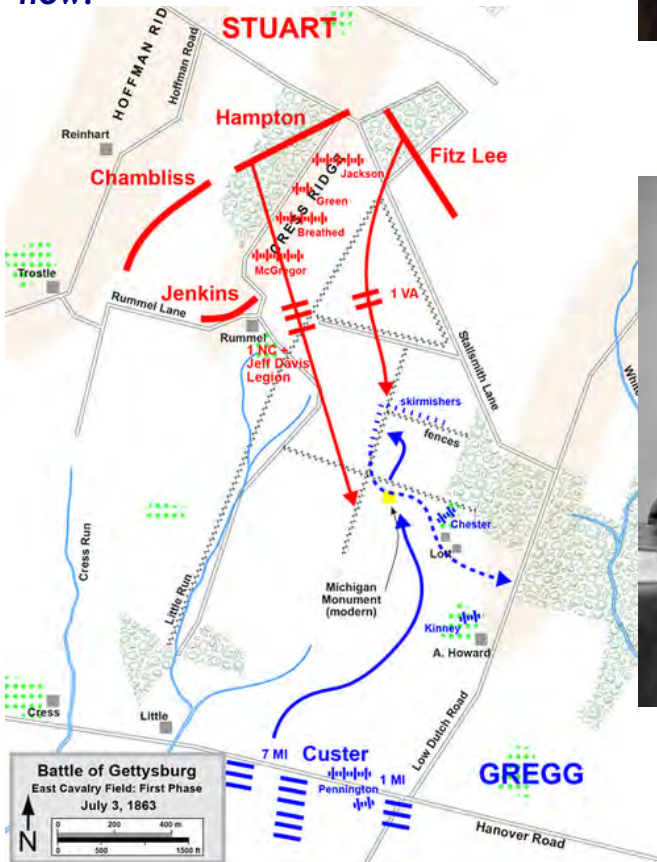
This special rate is only available **until Oct 4th**. A block of ten rooms have been reserved under PKCWRT. Due to a series of factors, the rate has gone up to \$145-\$150 depending on the bed size room.

Our Saturday tour is with Jim Hessler, Gettysburg Licensed Battlefield Guide, on Custer at Gettysburg. As a additional bonus, Jim will be our speaker on the September 14th on the topic of Custer at Gettysburg giving us an overview for our November walking tour of the battlefield. Please also sign up for using the link to the left.

We are still working on a Saturday night dinner and other add on details. We will let you know in the coming months. Please reserve your hotel now.



Jim Hessler,
Gettysburg Licensed Battlefield Guide



George Armstrong Custer,
General, US
Not to be confused with Jim Hessler

Phil Kearny CWRT

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PKCWRT 2022 Schedule

Due to Public Safety concerns
All Meetings & Presentations will be
via ONLINE - Zoom Calls

PKCWRT will re-examine our in person
meetings after our June 15th 2022
Zoom Meeting

Save the dates!

Wed, Mar 23 - 7pm

(Moved from Mar 16th)

Brian Kammerer
Civil War Map Making

[Register Here](#)

Wed, April 20- 7pm

Lance Herdegen

The Iron Brigade

[Register Here](#)

Wed, May 18 - 7pm

Peter Miele

Gettysburg - Seminary Ridge

[Register Here](#)

TIME AND SPEAKER CHANGE!

***Thursday, June 16 - 7pm**

Scott Mingus

The Lincoln Funeral Train

[Register Here](#)

Summer Break - July & August

Wed, Sept 14th - 7pm

Jim Hessler, LBG

Custer at Gettysburg

[Register Here](#)

Wed, Oct 19 - 7pm

TBD

Sat, Nov 5th

Jim Hessler, LBG

Gettysburg Tour in Gettysburg, PA

Wed, Nov 16 - 7pm

Vic Vignola

Struggle for the Adams House/Fair Oaks

[Register Here](#)

Sat, Dec 3rd - 4pm

PKCWRT Holiday Party

Bistro 107, Moonachie, NJ

"THE WAR BEGAN IN MY FRONT YARD & ENDED IN MY FRONT PARLOR"

"In [the] summer [of] 1861, [the merchant] Wilmer McLean and his family lived in Manassas, Virginia. His house [on a farm dubbed 'Yorkshire Plantation,' inherited by his wife, and tended by 14 slaves] was on the outskirts of the [First Manassas (Bull Run)] battlefield... [I don't know of any surviving photographs of "Yorkshire," please let me know if you do]. [On July 18, 1861, Confederate Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard moved his headquarters to the McLean house as the nearby Battle of Blackburn's Ford erupted. McLean's barn served as a Confederate field hospital, and the farm was under constant Federal artillery fire. A shell supposedly struck the kitchen chimney, sending debris downward and ruining a meal being prepared for Beauregard]. After the battle, McLean began selling sugar to the Confederate Army, and moved to Appomattox Court House where he believed he would be able to avoid the fighting and the Union occupation, which impeded his work. After the war, McLean would famously observe that "The war began in my front yard and ended in my front parlor."

MANASSAS -- "YORKSHIRE"

"Brig. Gen. Pierre G. T. Beauregard arrived on June 1, 1861 to take command of the Confederate Army [in the area of Manassas Junction]. He at once tried to familiarize himself with the surrounding country and sought information about the terrain from the people who lived in the vicinity. He later mentioned in his official report that Wilmer McLean was among those who helped to provide valuable information about the countryside." Edward P. Alexander was Beauregard's chief signal officer, and reported that he located an important signal station close to the McLean home. He implied that he received McLean's full cooperation in all of his pre-battle activities. Nearly three weeks before the

Battle of First Manassas/Bull Run, on June 30, McLean sold a horse to the Confederate QM for \$100.00.

McLean's most valuable contribution to the Confederacy at this time was agreeing to let the Confederate Army take over the buildings at "Yorkshire" for use as a military hospital. Rent receipts in the National Archives show that the barn was a hospital, and the dwellings and outbuildings were used as living quarters for surgeons and hospital attendants from July 17, 1861 until

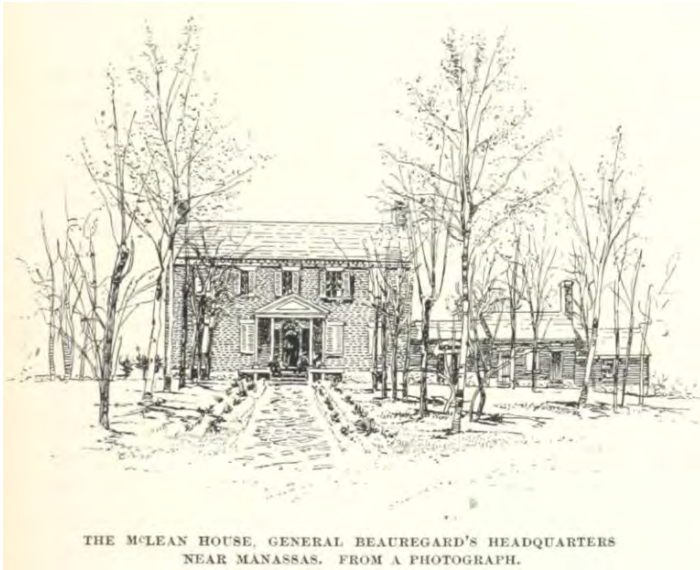
February 28, 1862, a period of seven and a half months. It is presumed that the McLeans left Manassas several days before the first battle. A rent receipt in the National Archives shows that the "Yorkshire" buildings were taken over on July 17, the day before Brig. Gen. Irvin McDowell made his initial thrust at the Confederate lines. E. P. Alexander said that he saw "nothing of the McLeans on the morning of July 18." Nearly all of McLean's close relatives were ardent Southern sympathizers, and Hannah McLean Cleary, one of his sisters, gave four of her sons to the Confederate Army.

By November 1, 1861, Wilmer was in Manassas working as a civilian for the Confederate Quartermaster, assisting in securing supplies and foraging. In 1862, however, records show he bought paper, candles, and

other scarce items in Richmond, had them shipped to Manassas, and then sold them to the Confederate Quartermaster for the highest price he could get. It is thought that he became angered and disillusioned by the destruction of his family's properties by the very same Confederate soldiers he had tried to help, causing him to tell E. P. Alexander that he went to Appomattox Court House in the hope that he would never again see another soldier.



Wilmer McLean



BACKGROUND

Wilmer McLean was born on May 3, 1814, Alexandria Co., Va. (now part of the District of Columbia). According to his niece, he was orphaned before the age of nine. After being raised by several of his relatives, he entered the wholesale and retail grocery business in Alexandria, eventually associating with the grocery firm of Kerr and McLean. One of his nieces remarked that although well-educated, Wilmer was an "impractical" man.

MARRIAGE

His wife, Virginia Beverley Hooe, was born on May 28, 1818 and first married to Dr. John Seddon Mason (d. 1850), by whom she had two daughters who were living at the time of the Civil War: Maria Beverley Mason (b. c.1844) and Osceola ("Ocie") Seddonia Mason (b. November 5, 1845). Both of these girls lived with the Wilmer McLeans at Manassas and Appomattox Court House. E. P. Alexander, a Confederate officer, saw them at Manassas in 1861 and described them as "two pretty daughters."

Wilmer and Virginia were married in St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Alexandria on January 19, 1853. "At the time of her marriage to Wilmer McLean, Mrs. Mason was a very wealthy widow, with extensive real estate holdings and other property. She owned the "Yorkshire" plantation in Prince William County, estimated to contain twelve hundred acres; a tract of land in Fairfax County with three hundred and thirty acres; and two other tracts of land in Prince William County containing five hundred acres. She also possessed fourteen slaves." Before their marriage, all of Virginia's assets were placed into a trust for her benefit, so that "notwithstanding the happening of such marriage the said Virginia B. shall thereafter

hold, possess and enjoy to her sole and separate use and behoof and subject to her sole disposition all the estate real and personal to which she is entitled in any right whatsoever." In other words, Wilmer McLean never owned the property.

MCLEAN'S CHILDREN

The McLean's first child, Wilmer McLean, Jr., was born on January 1, 1854, meaning he was 11-years-old at the time of Lee's surrender. Lucretia ("Lula") Virginia McLean, born on May 5, 1857, was the second child and "owner of the rag doll which was carried away from the McLean House at Appomattox at the time of the surrender." Their third child was born on January 25, 1863 and named Nannie Maury McLean. The fourth and last child was born on September 5, 1865. She was named Virginia Beverley, after her mother.



APPOMATTOX COURT HOUSE

Following the Battle of First Manassas, Mrs. McLean and the children did not return to the plantation at "Yorkshire" at any time during the Civil War. They resided in various Virginia localities, along with other war refugees, until they were finally able to settle down at Appomattox Court House in the fall of 1863. In the meantime, Wilmer sought handsome profits by speculating in sugar, requiring much travel to places like Vicksburg and Jackson, Mississippi.

The McLeans purchased the Raine House in Appomattox Court House, which was originally built by Charles Raine in 1848, described as "a comfortable, two-story brick

dwelling with a central hall upstairs and down. The well-known parlor, where the surrender conference took place, was on the left, and a large bedroom was on the right. At the rear of the hall, on the left, there was a stairway going down to the warming kitchen and dining room. Just to the left of the front door, a stairway ascended to a central hall which separated two bedrooms. There was a fire-place in each room. In the front yard, there was a well-house; on the left, an ice-house; in the rear were the kitchen, quarters for slaves, and a garden and barn. This was the house which was destined to become a noted American historical shrine." A number of "writers have mistakenly concluded that [Wilmer] moved to the rural community of Appomattox Court House in order to farm under peaceful conditions... The truth is that McLean spent most of his life in non-farm activities and was mainly a merchant, both by experience and inclination. Trading in various commodities attracted him more than farming."



THE SURRENDER

Beginning with the night of April 8, 1865, the Wilmer McLean's home was visited by several Union and Confederate officers. Confederate Maj. Gen. Thomas L. Rosser, was the first to make his headquarters at the McLean House, arriving on the night of April 8. He described McLean as his "old friend." Maj. Gen. John B. Gordon and Maj. Gen. William H. F. Lee came to the McLean House at 2 A.M. on April 9 and conferred with Rosser about the contemplated surrender, apparently in Wilmer's presence.

Colonel Charles Marshall, Lee's military secretary, sought a site for the surrender conference. Marshall said that the first white citizen he encountered in the village happened to be Wilmer McLean. After Wilmer first showed him a "dilapidated [house] that had no furniture in it," he offered his own house. An orderly was sent to inform General R. E. Lee and Colonel O.E. Babcock that they should come there. McLean must have extended his personal greetings to the three officers when they entered his home, and he was in the parlor much of the time while they waited for Grant. His presence may have been portrayed by Thomas Nast, a well-known American artist, in a rough sketch which he drew for a picture of Lee waiting for Grant (see, below, courtesy of the Library of Virginia). There are two men standing just behind Lee, who is seated in a chair. The taller of the two, a man wearing glasses, apparently is Marshall, while the somewhat shorter and heavier man, standing between Lee and Marshall, is [speculated by Frank Cauble to be] Wilmer McLean. He appears to be carrying on a conversation with Marshall. Nast portrayed Lee seated in a chair, [perhaps] fast asleep.

Grant arrived at the McLean House about 1:30 P.M. and immediately began his conference with Lee. McLean was evidently on his porch or in the front yard when Grant came up, and saw him enter the house, but there is no evidence that he had any conversation with Grant at that time. E. P. Alexander said, 'McLean was so indignant that I felt bound to apologize for our coming back, and to throw all the blame for it upon the gentlemen on the other side.' Lt. Col. Jenyns C. Battersby of the First New York Cavalry reported that McLean was 'a courteous gentleman.' He also pointed out, however, that he was 'not a little annoyed' by the persons who carried away his furniture.'

AFTER THE SURRENDER

At the conclusion of the conference between the two generals, Lee returned to the Confederate lines, while Grant remained at the McLean House for about an hour and a half, during which time his aides prepared military dispatches connected with the surrender. Confederate Maj. Gen. Henry Heth, who had served with Grant in the U. S. Army before the war, stated that he visited with Grant for about half an hour during this interval. By the time that Alexander Gardner's photographers arrived, apparently there was little in the surrender room to photograph, but emptiness, because souvenir hunters had carried away practically everything -- whether purchased or plundered, based upon varying accounts.



General Lee at rest in the McLean House awaiting General Grant, sketched by Thomas Nast, a well-known American artist (courtesy of the Library of Virginia).

After the McLean House was dismantled, bricks were picked up for many years, treasured as souvenirs. Judge Walter B. Jones of Montgomery, Alabama, whose father was at Appomattox, wrote on August 22, 1961: "Recently, a friend of mine, living in Kentucky, presented me' an original brick from the old McLean home at Appomattox. This friend's grandfather was an officer in General Lee's office and the brick was given to him as a souvenir at the last Confederate Reunion at Richmond, Virginia in 1933.

Also, on the morning of April 10, the commissioners appointed by Grant and Lee began to work out the final details of the surrender. Union Maj. Gens. John Gibbon and Charles Griffin, and Brig. Gen. Wesley Merritt conferred with Confederate officers Lt. Gen. James Longstreet, Maj. Gen. John B. Gordon, and Brig. Gen. William N. Pendleton. Eventually, they met at the McLean House, where they signed the final papers at 8:30 P.M. McLean might have witnessed the signing.

Gibbon made his headquarters at the McLean House, and E. P. Alexander said that he rode into the village on April 11 to confer with Gibbon about turning over the

surrendered artillery. He saw the yard of the McLean House full of tents, and McLean was also there. "He was a short stout little fellow with a face easily remembered" Alexander declared. "I said, 'Hello! MacLean, why what are you doing here?' "He replied, 'Alexander, what the hell are you fellows doing here?' "Gibbon maintained his headquarters at the McLean House for some little time.

The surrender parade was held on April 12, with Brig. Gen. Joshua L. Chamberlain in charge. Chamberlain was extremely courteous in his treatment of the defeated Confederates, as Grant desired, and was equally polite in his dealings with the citizens of Appomattox Court House. Grant directed Gibbon to leave surplus wagons at Appomattox Court House for the country people to pick up. G. W. Munford wrote to his wife on April 21 and said that he saw "great numbers of wagons and gear, spades, picks, shovels, iron of every description suitable for farm purposes, trace chains and a great many other useful things, besides many broken down horses and mules."

A dispatch printed in a Lynchburg newspaper on May 6, 1865, quoted R. E. Lee, in an interview with Thomas M. Cook of the New York Herald conducted in Richmond (first appearing in a story published on April 29th), that he did not believe his surrender at Appomattox Court House meant the end of the Confederacy: "As to the effect of his surrender, he was free to say that it was a severe blow to the South, but not a crushing blow. It was of military, not political significance."

Some Virginians continued to have such high hopes for the Confederacy after the surrender that they were at first reluctant to accept United States currency at its face value. An article in a Lynchburg newspaper on May 24, 1865, reported that "some of the hucksters (at the Lynchburg Market House) receive U. S. currency at a small discount, some at one-half, while others take it at par." Confederate money steadily went down in value, however, and by the summer of 1865 was generally regarded as worthless.

At the beginning of 1866, McLean's prospects were dismal indeed. The Union troops were gone; he had no money to finance any business activities; he was not prepared to engage in farming; all sources of revenue had disappeared. In order to provide his family with the necessities of life, he was forced to borrow money wherever he could. In an effort to extricate himself from this desperate financial situation, he decided to have some pictures made of the McLean House and to ask General R. E. Lee to sit for a portrait.

Exactly one week before the first anniversary of the surrender, McLean addressed a letter to Lee requesting him to grant two or three sittings for a portrait by a New York artist. After declaring that he was asking for this personal favor with unfeigned reluctance, he explained that he was also planning to have some pictures made of the McLean House as it was on the "unfortunate day" of April 9, 1865. Lee replied, by letter dated April 6, 1866, politely declining.

Wilmer then decided to issue an engraving of the surrender room while it was occupied by Lee and Grant, a number of Union officers, and Colonel

Charles Marshall, Lee's military secretary. The title printed beneath the engraving reads "The Room in the McLean House, at Appomattox C. H., in which Gen. Lee surrendered to Gen. Grant." It is said that most of the details in regard to the room were supplied by McLean himself. McLean's picture bears the name of "Major S, Knapp Engraving, Lith. Co. 71 Bdway." It was advertised for sale in New York papers. To finance the publication of the surrender picture, McLean borrowed money from Harrison, Goddin, and Apperson, a banking house in Richmond. He was able to sell the copyright to the picture on January 8, 1866, for \$12,000.00, but it is doubtful that he ever received very much of this amount because he bought the copyright back on June 28, 1866, for \$100.00. See an image of that engraving, below, courtesy of Library of Congress DIG-pga-02091.



Most of the information, above, following the introductory paragraph, is from or quoted in: Frank P. Cauble's BIOGRAPHY OF WILMER McLEAN, APPOMATTOX COURT HOUSE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK VIRGINIA (OCTOBER 31, 1969).

<http://npshistory.com/publications/apco/mclean-bio.pdf>

PHOTOGRAPHS ATTRIBUTED TO T.H. O'SULLIVAN

Pictured, below, is an April 1865 photograph of McLean's house, located in Appomattox Court House, in which the terms of the surrender were negotiated and agreed upon. According to the Library of Congress, this photograph



(DIG-ppmsca-35137): "shows the house in Appomattox where the terms of surrender between Generals Grant and Lee were signed The family of the owner of the house, Wilmer McLean, are seated on the steps." It is attributed to T.H. O'Sullivan.

Detail from DIG-ppmsca-35119 is provided, below, to show the family on the porch of the house (detail from DIG-ppmsca-12910, the same photo appearing in Gardner's Sketchbook, also can be seen below).

Pictured on the porch, according to Patrick Schroeder (Park Historian at Appomattox Court House NHP), are Wilmer McLean, aged 50; his wife, Virginia Beverly Hooe Mason McLean, (46); step-daughters Maria (20) and Ocie Mason (19); and children Lula (👧), and Nannie (2). Those identifications are based upon several photographic views of Wilmer and Virginia in the NPS collection. The children are assumed to be who they are based upon their ages.

In a different photo, Wilmer, Jr. (11), Lula (👉), and Nannie (2) are pictured, wearing the same clothing, with another unidentified child on the house porch, in a photograph taken from a different angle (Library of Congress B817-7292) (see detail, below). That image also was created by Alexander Gardner's photographers.

O'Sullivan's camera also captured a wide view of the home from behind a picket fence (inside of which the other two photos were taken) created when no one was seated on the porch, in Library of Congress B811-1210 (see below, and detail therefrom).

An undated and unattributed photographic print of the McLean House from the U.S. Army Heritage & Education Center, MOLLUS collection, Volume 38, page 1900, also gives us a perspective outside of the fence line. Can you identify the people pictured in this view? The seated man may be the husband of one of Wilmer's two step-daughters (Maria or Ocie). We may also see Wilmer's two step-daughters (including one with a baby in her lap), a young child standing and clinging to the side of the seated man, and a girl standing in a long skirt at the bottom of the stairs. There might also be a child standing inside or on the opposite side of a small fenced-in enclosure.

Wilmer McLean might have posed for the camera in Library of Congress B817-7169 (see final detail, below). I have placed detail from that image side-by-side with DIG-ppmsca-35119 for your inspection.



Patrick Schroeder says that this man is "believed [by some] to be Wilmer McLean, [but] there are other candidates that we don't know what they looked like, such as Francis Meeks, whose store was right beside O'Sullivan's camera. The clothing on the man in front of the Courthouse seems the same, but the hat is different." A print of an undated, but much earlier, studio photo of Wilmer McLean, appears below, courtesy of the National Park Service.

DEPARTING APPOMATTOX COURTHOUSE

In November 1866, Wilmer McLean began advertising the sale of his home, its contents, and several acres of his land in many papers. Newspapers in Chicago, New Jersey, West Virginia, Memphis, South Carolina, etc. mentioned the advertisement. See an example of an ad, from an original copy of the November 12, 1866 edition of the National Daily Intelligencer [Washington, D.C.], courtesy of its owner, Jerry Crow. In 1867, the McLeans moved away from Appomattox Court House. The McLeans lead a difficult life after they left the village, retreating back to the Manassas and Alexandria areas. In the spring of 1869, the banking firm in Richmond filed a suit to establish priorities among Wilmer's creditors because he was hopelessly underwater.



When one of Wilmer's stepdaughters, "Ocie" Mason, married Thomas Tibbs, one of John Mosby's cavalymen, McLean leaned upon his personal friendship with Mosby when the latter began the post-war practice of law in Warrenton, Virginia. McLean decided that he would follow Mosby's example of both of becoming a Republican and supporting Grant in the election of 1872. Wilmer's switch to the Republican Party resulted in his appointment, in June, 1873, as an Internal Revenue Gauger for the seventh collection district of Virginia. He received a better appointment as Inspector with the Bureau of Customs at Alexandria, Virginia, on October 4,



1876 but was "removed" on January 20, 1880. He died on June 5, 1882 and was buried in the cemetery at St. Paul's Church in Alexandria. His wife, who lived until 1893, and two of his daughters, Nannie and Lucretia (Lula), are buried there as well.

THE HOUSE

To read what became of the McLean's Appomattox Court House home, read our board member John Bank's article at: <https://john-banks.blogspot.com/.../utter-desolation...>

MORE INFORMATION

Here are 10 facts about the surrender at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, which formally began at around 1:30 in the afternoon on April 9, 1865 when Lee and Grant (and several of their officers) met at the McLean House in the village. <https://www.battlefields.org/.../10-facts-appomattox...>

OTHER SOURCES

You can see the location of Wilmer McLean's house in Manassas, Virginia in the National Park Service map of the Battle of Blackburn's Ford, below, located at: https://www.nps.gov/.../onli.../civil_war_series/17/sec2.htm

For an account about and images relating to the slaves of Wilmer McLean, and a possible daughter whom he may have fathered by one of those slaves, see:

<https://www.backtherethen.com/>

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/533371>

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/530400>





Phil Kearny Civil War Round Table

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